ORDER

SUBJ: **AIRPORTS** PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

1 <u>PURPOSE.</u> This order describes, for field implementation, the objectives of the Airports program for **FY 1979** and **FY 1980,** provides a policy statement to guide the accomplishment of objectives, and outlines program priorities for meeting the objectives in the most resource effective manner.

2 <u>DISTRIBUTION.</u> This order is distributed to branch level in the Washington Offices of Airports, Division level in Air Traffic, **Airways** Facilities, Flight Standards Services, and Office of Budget; Regional Airports, Air Traffic, Airway Facilities, Flight Standards, and Budget Divisions; and to all Airports District/Field Offices.

3. **CANCELLATION.** Order **1820.1A,** Airports Program Priorities, dated **February 8, 1972,** is cancelled.

4 <u>BACKGROUND,</u> For some years the Airports program has been going through a period of increasing demands for program services and grant funding, increasing authorizations for development grant funds, and growing complexity in requirements based on statutes and regulations. On the other hand, direct staffing authorizations have been successively reduced.

   a. Efforts have been made **to** simplify and streamline program activities with some success. There have been significant reorganizations within **regional** Airports program organizations (e.g., closing of Airports **District** Offices, or consolidation of regional branches) and various internal combinations of functions and tasks, plus tests of combinations of **functions with** other programs.

   b. Order **1820.1A,** issued in **1972,** also called for application of **program priorities** which assured that certain activities would progress, but which necessarily led to certain activities being carried out only in part, deferred, or, in effect, abandoned. During the years since **passage** of the Airport and Airway Development Act there has been **gradual divergence** among the regions from these Airports Program Priorities and **each** region has tended more and more to take its own route, with the result that there has not been a fully uniform national approach to **overall program** accomplishment.

c.   It is appropriate to reevaluate Airports program activities in terms of current program policy and **objectives and** to restate priorities, particularly in view of changing budgetary considerations. It can be expected that program emphasis may change from time to time. Accordingly, priorities may have to be reconsidered and appropriate changes made to this order.

5   <u>PROGRAM POLICY.</u> The Airports program long-range goal of assisting in the development of a safe and effective national airport system **is** becoming increasingly difficult to meet due to continually increasing program requirements and limitations in operations resources. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize the implementation of statutory requirements in the setting of near term objectives and the establishment of **priorities** to accomplish the objectives, As a result, ancillary activities not directly contributing to fulfilling the requirements imposed by law must, of necessity, be conducted as resources permit.

6.   <u>Major National Objectives,</u>

a.   The objectives stated herein are intended to serve as national guidance along with the program priority statements which follow. Together they guide how the program should be viewed by regional directors and regional Airports program personnel in planning and pursuing program accomplishment.

b   This guidance is not intended to be applied rigidly; the need for management flexibility is fully appreciated. However, the overall accomplishment of the Airports program in a region will be evaluated in terms of how the program effort was directed to the sum of these objectives and priorities, including the effectiveness with which available resources were used to this end.

. **c.**   <u>Objectives.</u> These objectives are based on current statutory requirements. **No** attempt is made to cover every function for which workload counts are normally made; these objectives are "major', and are to be construed as indicating program scope and **direction.** All objectives listed are of equal importance, regardless of their sequence.

(1) <u>Airport Development Aid Program</u> **(ADAP)**

(a) Develop regional programs that encourage the funding **of** highest priority projects. Discretionary funds should be used to promote this objective.

(b) Avoid 'the adverse impact of sponsor **entitlement** -carryover on future year discretionary funds, by encouraging the use of **sponsor** entitlement funds in the originating year or through multiyear commitments.

(c) Give highest funding priority to mandatory safety and security items to ensure a safe national system of airports.

(d) Give special program emphasis to development which provides satellite capacity and supports instrument training facilities for general aviation in high density air traffic hubs.

(e) Timely administer all relocation assistance cases for ADAP projects.

(2) Airports Planning Grant Program (PGP)

(a) Obligate regional allotments in a timely fashion and consistent with the project priority criteria.

(b) Maximize the usefulness of planning grant outputs for the National Airport System Plan and as technical and environmental support for ADAP projects.

(3) Environmental Program

For airport actions requiring environmental assessment, complete environmental determinations on a timely basis.

(4) National Airport System Plan (NASP)

Maintain currency of NASP data.

(5) Airport Engineering. Provide engineering recommendations and support on questions of design, construction, and modification of standards as they pertain to the safety, economy, durability, and work--ship on civil airports.

(6) Airport Certification and Safety. Inspect all airports having or applying for an operating certificate to ensure their continued compliance with airport safety regulations; and promote overall airport safety beyond regulatory requirements,

(7) Compliance. Assure that all federally obligated airports are in compliance with applicable agreements.

(8) Federal Real Property Conveyance. Process all Federal real property conveyances in a timely manner.

7. Resource Management Priorities.

a. The listing of activities or products by priority grouping is made in consideration of an imbalance between general workload and operations resources. Choices have to be made continually as to where

employee hours and skills will be directed, and the local manager has, and should have, discretion in each such determination. There will be instances in which the best decision will be to act on a relatively low priority matter. However, the overall thrust of effort should be to achieve the local portion of national program objectives and to recognize and apply national priorities.

b. All recognized Airports program activities are worthwhile and either directly or by extension derive from statutory mandate. There are risks inherent in any decision to favor one action over others. Thus, it is not easy either to describe or apply priorities. The intent is to minimize risks, to increase the consistency with which all regions will make priority decisions, and to encourage emphasis on actions which will be most influential in achieving national objectives in conformance with the requirements of statute and regulation.

c. Conversely, both in keeping with the Administration's general outlook on Federal/state/local interrelationships and the exigencies of the Airports program staffing situation, lower priority is given to activities in which it is possible to rely more on sponsors and others to perform on matters which Airports program personnel have traditionally taken an active role. Activities which are desirable, but not absolutely essential to achievement of national objectives must be given lesser priority. Also, it is of higher priority to assure the initiation of action and substantial progress on the action than to monitor closely every detail in its accomplishment., Acceptance of sponsor certifications, with the risks which may be inherent, is supportive of these principles. Thus, sponsor errors, if within acceptable bounds, should be viewed as a transitional burden to program performance.

d. <u>High Priority</u>.

Certain key activities are integral to the accomplishment of the major national objectives. Each of them is in the highest priority category and are equal in priority regardless of their sequence. These key activities are:

(1) <u>Airport Development Aid Program</u> **(ADAP)**

> (a) Allocate funds.
> **(b)** Obligate funds.
> **(c)** Payments.
> **(d)** Fund control.
> **(e)** Project closeouts.

(2) <u>Planning Grant Program</u> **(PGP)**

> (a) Obligate funds.
> **(b)** Payments.
> **(c)** Fund control.
> **(d)** Project closeouts.

(3) <u>Environmental **Program**</u>

Conduct activities needed to support **ADAP** projects and real property transfers.

(4) <u>National Airport System Plan</u>; Maintain **NASP** currency, coordinate **NASP** recommendations and conduct joint planning conferences on an as needed basis.

(5) <u>Airport Engineering</u>.

(a) Review grant applications, airport layout plans, and construction plans and **specificatons** for compliance with standards (or sponsor's engineering experience and qualifications from which engineering recommendations on acceptance of certification can be made) and related to a current or prospective grant.

(b) Conduct periodic project progress inspections and final inspections (or acceptance of sponsor certifications).

(c) Reach timely decisions on proposed modifications to standards.

(6) <u>Relocation Assistance</u>

(7) <u>Airport Certification</u>.

(a) Annually inspect and **followup** on airports requiring certification; issue certificates or exemptions as appropriate.

(b) Apply sanctions (enforcement procedures) as appropriate.

(c) Promote and participate in community airport safety activities.

(8) <u>Compliance</u>. Review airports which may receive grants in current year and airports subject to safety certification and respond to complaints.

(9) <u>Airport Data Collection</u>.

(a) Inspect all certificated airports.

(b) Inspect or monitor contracts for the inspection of all noncertificated public-use airports.

(c) Obtain initial Airport Master Record for each newly **constructed/reported** public-use landing facility.

(10) Airspace- Reviews. Process airspace cases which are directly related to ADAP projects.

(11) National Runway Friction Measurement Program. Provide support as required for the national program.

(12) Regional Bird Hazard Control Program. Initiate corrective actions to reduce hazards.

(13) Federal Real Property Transfers. Process applications for property transfers which are needed to permit the issuance of ADAP grants.

d. Medium Priority

(1) Federal Real Property Transfers. Process applications not related to the issuance of an ADAP grant.

(2) Airspace Reviews. For NASP airports, process airspace cases not directly related to ADAP projects.

(3) Environmental program. Conduct activities other than those in 7.d.(3).

(4) Airport Engineering, Review airport layout plans and provide engineering guidance for NASP airports.

e. Lesser Priority

(1) Planning Assistance and Coordination. Provide assistance and coordination for activities other than those associated with NASP, PGP, or ADAP.

(2) Airport Engineering. Review airport layout plans and provide engineering guidance for public use airports which are not in the NASP.

(3) Pavement Evaluations. Conduct evaluations where design data is not available.

(4) Compliance. Review federally obligated airports which will not receive grants in current year.

(5) Airport Zoning and Land-Use Planning Reviews

(6) Airspace Reviews. Process airspace cases not covered in 7d.(10) or 7e.(2).

    (7) <u>Surplus Personal Property Transactions</u>

    (8) **<u>Training</u>**

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